



November 7, 2016

Rancho Opens State-of-the-Art Wellness Center

By Michael Wilson



A Message From the Director

With all the bitterness and charges and cross-charges of the national election I realize how lucky we are to work within the County of Los Angeles. There are disagreements to be sure, but there is also, here, a fundamental belief that we have to work together to get the people's work done. There is also a deep seated belief in the importance of taking care of the most vulnerable among us: the homeless, the mentally ill, those with physical illnesses, those caught in the clutches of addictions, those who have grown up in violent surroundings or who haven't received the care they need. It makes me proud to work here.

You will soon be hearing about the challenge to create a logo and motto for the Health Agency that captures the spirit of collaboration. There are many very creative people in our three departments. Send in your entries to <http://www.hala.care>.

With the snap of cold weather, and the end of daylight savings time, I reluctantly admit that winter is coming. Fortunately, this is Los Angeles, and so even in winter I can generally bicycle without a jacket! Best wishes.



Mitch Katz, MD

L.A. County and City of Downey leaders opened the Don Knabe Wellness Center at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center on October 12. The building's modern, sweeping façade offers a glimpse into the state-of-the-art amenities inside, including an aquatic therapy pool with treadmill, gymnasium, and rooms for yoga, Zumba, and a range of health and wellness programs. The Wellness Center is part of a first-phase transformation of the campus that will be completed in 2020. The new facility will fill an important role in the rehabilitative continuum of care, as persons with disability move from inpatient skilled therapy to a community-based model of self-management.

Supervisor Don Knabe, a long-time champion of the rehabilitation hospital, called the new facility "the jewel of Los Angeles County's health care system." For patients, the 13,000 square foot space offers a bit of everything, even a meditative garden, where they can relax after a game of wheelchair basketball or a workout in the gym with equipment specially designed for people in wheelchairs. Airy and light-filled therapy and instructional spaces will hold classes focusing on improving balance, strength, endurance, coordination, and enhanced overall physical activity. Educational programs will address topics like nutrition, recreation, diabetes management and other health issues.

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HIV Pilot Shows Impact of Rapid Testing

By Michael Wilson

A three year grant-funded project led by the DHS Office of Women's Health Programs and Innovation that increased rapid HIV testing and enhanced collaboration between DHS primary and specialty care clinics, points to new opportunities for the health system to provide recommended screening for HIV with rapid results and counseling. The aim of the project was to increase the percentage of clients at three Women's Health clinics receiving HIV testing by 20% above baseline (10%) annually, or 60% above baseline over the three years of the grant cycle. The more than doubled that goal with a total of 5,107 tests administered.

Office of Women's Health Programs and Innovation director Erin Saleeby, MD, says the demonstration established that rapid HIV testing and contraception counseling was acceptable to patients and strengthened relationships



among DHS HIV and Women's Health clinics through trainings and in-services.

"We did contraception training at two of our largest HIV clinics for staff, and visited the third HIV clinic to assess the care given for women of childbearing age regarding their contraception needs and provision." The project also

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(‘CENTER’)

The aquatic therapy environment offers a new and effective tool for care providers. Previously, patients had to travel to a local YMCA for pool therapy. The new environment allows for a better therapy setting with top-of-the line equipment and stronger peer mentorship. The Center opens to the Don Knabe Central Plaza with over 31,000 square feet of outdoor space that can accommodate 200 people and features an outdoor flexible-use area for sports events and performance and assembly space. The plaza can accommodate



L.A. County Supervisors Don Knabe and Hilda L. Solis (center) joined Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard and former Downey Mayor Mario Guerra for the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

two full basketball courts, which will be used to host Rancho’s wheel chair sports. “Hope, dignity and perseverance was in the air today as we celebrated Rancho,” added Downey Mayor Alex Saab. “We are grateful they are part of the Downey family.” The second phase will include needed seismic safety and facility renovations and construction of a centralized entrance. The Rancho campus dates back to the 1880s and later became a renowned center for care of polio patients. The facility consistency ranks among the top rehabilitation hospitals in the nation.

LGBT Clinic Planned at LAC+USC

By Michael Wilson

LAC+USC Medical Center will open a health clinic serving Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) patients early next year, the first County-run clinic designed to specifically serve LGBT persons across the lifespan. Astrid Heger, MD, a professor of clinical pediatrics at the USC Keck School of Medicine and director of the hospital’s renowned Violence Intervention Program (VIP), will oversee the clinic. She envisions a medical village where primary and specialty care services will be housed together for continuity of care. Case management, hormone replacement therapy and mental health will be among the services offered in addition to linkages to housing, employment and legal advocacy. Kaiser Permanente, Children’s Hospital of Los Angeles and other private health facilities already offer similar clinics and services, but the LAC+USC clinic offers DHS an opportunity to change the health trajectories of LGBT persons who are uninsured, or insured but not in regular care due to discrimination, health plan treatment denials, high cost, lack of access, inability to find LGBT-friendly providers, or disjointed care. “We have an opportunity and an obligation to do this right and to raise the bar in care to our LGBT community through responsive and compassionate care,” says hospital chief medical officer Brad Spellberg, MD. Clinical practices will be evidenced-based and culturally competent, including the hiring of LGBT-identified providers and caregivers. “The needs of the patient population will guide the evolution of services.” Members of the LGBT community face greater health challenges than their heterosexual peers due to stigma and discrimination associated with higher rates of behavioral health disorders, substance abuse and suicide. LAC+USC has been recognized among a



select number of U.S. hospitals by the Human Rights Foundation (HRF) for raising the bar in care to LGBT persons and meeting or exceeding measures on the HRF’s Healthcare Equity Index (HEI). LAC+USC is collaborating with Keck Medicine of USC on a number of efforts to build welcoming and inclusive communities on both campuses. A majority of clinic funding will come from grants and private donations.

A Classical Halloween



LAC+USC Medical Center Department of Pediatrics physician Erica Li, MD gave a rousing Halloween performance of Danse Macabre by Saint-Saëns in the inpatient tower lobby on Monday, October 31. Dr. Li is one of a few volunteer musicians who play the piano for patients and guests as part of the hospital’s music program.

DHS Hosts Third Annual Diabetes Day

3RD ANNUAL
Los Angeles County Department of Health Services (DHS)
Diabetes Day

Monday, November 7, 2016
7:30 am - 4:30 pm

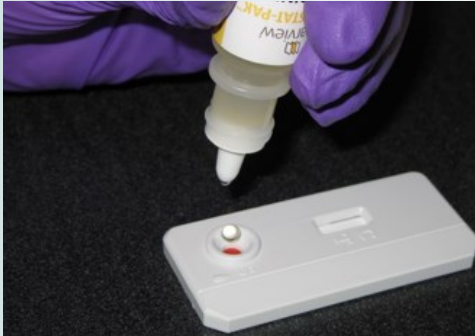
DIABETES

The California Endowment
1000 North Alameda Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Presented By: The DHS Endocrinology Specialist Care Workgroup & USC Office of Continuing Medical Education

Click image above for program agenda

(‘TESTING’)



aimed to improve specialty care linkages by 10% and raise awareness of HIV Clinic staff of the safety of contraception methods for HIV positive persons. Data shows increased use of family planning methods in HIV positive patients. In addition to strengthening the services offered at both HIV and Women’s clinic sites, the program also shed new light on barriers to testing. The introduction of the newest generation HIV test called the “Architect” at DHS facilities caused some to question the need for rapid testing done by earlier generation tests. Saleeby notes that while providers are more inclined to use the latest generation test that offers detection as soon as two weeks post exposure, patients were more willing to have the rapid test done while waiting to see the clinician rather than go to a lab as required with the latest generation test. Pilots such as this provide the Health Agency with much needed information on the implementation of new technologies and how they impact patient experience. The Los Angeles County Department of HIV and STD programs developed the data collection protocol and provided the free rapid HIV tests and provider training. Both DPH and DHS will continue to work together on next steps for the expansion of protocols that offer high-quality testing services and a patient-centered experience with counseling and testing.